

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus, operatively coupled by a communications channel to a host computer, the host computer having at least a first disk drive, the apparatus comprising:

a second disk drive;

a user-activatable button, associated with said second disk drive;

circuitry, operatively coupled to said second disk drive, which, in response to a press of said user-activatable button, causes a backup of at least some data from said first disk drive to said second disk drive.

2. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive is an external disk drive.

3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive has a housing and wherein said user-activatable button is associated with said data storage device by being mounted on said housing.

4. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive has a housing and wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host computer.

5. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said communications channel includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising an indicator which indicates execution of said backup.

7. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein, during normal use, operation of said user-activatable button suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said user-activatable button.

8. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 1, wherein, prior to normal operation of said apparatus for backup, said host computer can be provided with configuration information relating to said backup.

9. A data storage apparatus, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:

a housing containing a data storage device and circuitry for controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device, said housing being external to said host device wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

a communications channel for accommodating the sending of data to and from said host device;

at least a first user input device associated with said data storage apparatus;

circuitry, coupled to said data storage device, which, in response to at least a first

5 input provided on said user input device, performs at least one of:

a user-selectable function performed at least partially on said host device; and

substantially automatic storage of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

10. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9 wherein said host device is a computer.

10 11. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said substantially automatic storage of data comprises a back up of at least part of the totality of data stored in said computer.

12. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said substantially automatic storage of data comprises a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said computer.

15 13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said substantially automatic storage of data comprises a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said computer.

14. A method for use in connection with a data storage device, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:

20 providing a housing which contains said data storage device said housing being external to said host device wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

electronically controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device over a communications channel;

providing input via a user input device associated with said data storage device;

25 performing, in response to at least a first input provided on said user input device, at least one of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

30 substantially automatic storing of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

15. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a back up of at least part of the totality of data stored in said computer.

16. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said substantially automatic storing of data

comprises performing a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said computer.

17. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said computer.

5 18. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said user input device comprises a pressable button and wherein said step of providing input comprises pressing said pressable button.

19. Apparatus for use in connection with a data storage device, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:

10 a housing means for containing said data storage device said housing means being external to said host device wherein said housing means is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

means for controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device over a communications means;

15 a user input means, associated with said data storage apparatus;

means for performing, in response to at least a first input provided on said user input means, at least one of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

20 substantially automatic storage of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

20. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 wherein said communications means includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

25 21. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 wherein said user input means comprises a pressable button.

22. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 further comprising means for providing an indication of the execution of said at least one of a user-selectable function and substantially automatic storage.

30 23. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer, comprising:
a disk drive;

a housing containing said disk drive, said housing and disk drive being external to

said host computer wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a communications channel;

a push button mounted on said housing;

circuitry configured to perform a backup of at least selected data stored in said computer, onto said disk drive, in response to activation of said push button.

24. Apparatus as claimed in claim 23 further comprising an indicator which indicates initiation, progress or completion of said backup.

25. A method for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer, comprising: mounting a disk drive in a housing, said housing and disk drive being external to said host computer wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

controlling said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a communications channel;

mounting a push button on said housing, operatively connected, at least indirectly, to said disk drive;

performing a backup of at least selected data stored in said computer, onto said disk drive, in response to activation of said push button.

26. A method, as claimed in claim 25, further comprising providing configuration information relating to said backup, prior to normal use of said disk drive for backup.

27. A method, as claimed in claim 26 wherein said configuration information includes identification of drives, directories, sub-directories, files or file types designated for backup.

28. A method, as claimed in claim 26 wherein said configuration information includes designation of a backup destination.

29. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer, comprising: a disk drive;

a housing containing said disk drive;

circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said disk drive;

a push button operatively coupled to said housing;

circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button and to pass said

button status information to said host computer;

said host computer configured to respond to at least a first button status, or status change, by executing software which is configured to store at least first information in said host computer onto said disk drive.

- 5 30. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device.
31. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 29, wherein said disk drive is coupled to bridge circuitry which provided for serial-to-parallel data conversion and wherein said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button is provided on said bridge
- 10 circuitry.
32. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 29, wherein said disk drive is coupled to drive control circuitry which includes control of an actuator arm of said disk drive and wherein said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button is provided on said drive control circuitry.
- 15 33. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said host computer configured to respond to at least a first button status by periodically polling to determine button status.
34. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said host computer is configured to respond to at least a first button status by receiving an asynchronous message from said circuitry configured to receive an indication of a status of said button.
- 20 35. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said software includes software for passing a button notification to a launcher application.
36. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said software includes software for querying a binder database to determine at least one of a backup application name and a backup script name.
- 25 37. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said software includes software for executing said backup application, using said script name as a parameter.